

VZCZCXRO4462
RR RUEH DU RUEH MR RUEH RN
DE RUEH KI #1032/01 2421320
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 301320Z AUG 07
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO RUEH LI/AMEMBASSY LISBON 0036
RUEH C/SECSTATE WASHDC 6771
INFO RUEH XR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEA IIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 001032

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/13/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [EPET](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [EMIN](#) [CG](#) [AO](#)
SUBJECT: CONGO, ANGOLA ANNOUNCE PLANS TO DEMARCAT E BORDER,
DEVELOP SHARED OIL VENTURES

REF: A. KINSHASA 318
[1](#)B. KINSHASA 343
[1](#)C. KINSHASA 906
[1](#)D. KINSHASA 884

Classified By: PolCouns DBrown, reasons 1.4 b/d

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Congo and Angola agreed in July 24-31 meetings in Luanda to refer a lingering border dispute to a committee of experts, and to share certain offshore oil revenues. Presidents Kabila and dos Santos met July 30-31 and finalized these and other agreements. The two sides plan to conclude terms for construction of a highway from Luanda across Congolese territory to Cabinda at a follow-up meeting in Kinshasa in October. Results of the meetings made public to date demonstrate the value both governments place on maintaining good bilateral relations. End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) The Congolese and Angolan governments agreed during the eighth meeting of their bilateral Mixed Commission July 24-31 in Luanda to establish a joint experts commission including Belgium and Portugal to define their full 2511 km border. They also concluded several agreements for joint initiatives in areas including petroleum, immigration, mining and culture, which were signed by Presidents Joseph Kabila and Eduardo dos Santos at the end of Kabila's July 30-31 official visit. Additional agreements, including on infrastructure and transportation, are scheduled for completion at the commission's October meeting in Kinshasa.

[1](#)3. (SBU) According to press reports, the two delegations totaled 21 ministers as well as numerous other senior officials and experts. They were headed by Congolese Minister of State for Foreign Relations and International Cooperation Mbusa Nyamwisi and Angolan Foreign Minister Jose Eduardo de Almeida and included sub-commissions on defense and security, economic, transportation and cultural issues. Mbusa told us August 2 that the meetings had gone well. He highlighted movement toward resolving a border dispute around the Congolese territory of Kahembe (ref A), sharing certain offshore oil revenues and constructing a highway and pipeline across Bas-Congo province to the Angolan enclave of Cabinda.

[1](#)4. (C) The statement by the two presidents provides details on next steps for resolving the border dispute. This had provided opportunities for grandstanding by politicians in Kinshasa that, according to press reports, aggravated dos Santos. Mbusa told us he accepts the validity of the March 2007 bilateral report which placed the disputed territory in Angola, rather than the opposite conclusions contained in the July report by a special National Assembly commission (refs B, C). In the end, the two delegations agreed to create a

joint Congolese-Angolan-Belgian-Portuguese experts group to review historical and technical data to delineate the entire frontier. Mbusa said the group will hold its first meeting in October. (Note: On August 28 the Belgian Chargé d'Affaires and the Portuguese ambassador here confirmed that the RDC and Angola have formally invited them to join a four party commission to demarcate the border. Both European nations have agreed to take part. End note.)

¶15. (C) The delegations also agreed to a 50/50 share of production and revenues from any new oil wells developed in an offshore Zone of Common Interest extending from the 15 km coastal zone in a 10 km strip to the 375 km (200-mile) limit. Wells currently being exploited by Angola in the zone will not be affected by the arrangement. Mbusa expressed satisfaction, noting that existing agreements provided no economic benefits to Congo. Reporters quoted Petroleum Minister Lambert Mende estimating that results would take at least a year to achieve, and Mbusa enthusiastically predicting OPEC membership "in the near future." Mende told a radio audience August 8 that the two governments have begun work to determine the limits of the zone.

¶16. (C) Mbusa also noted that the delegations had agreed in principle to joint ownership of a USD 2bn highway linking Luanda and Cabinda across the Congolese province of Bas-Congo. He said Congo will own the span which passes through Bas-Congo. He said the link will also include a pipeline and a spur to the Congolese port of Boma. The formal agreement is expected to be signed in October.

¶17. (C) None of the texts have been made public, and news accounts of the meetings have been spotty. Reports by the

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official Congolese press agency noted the two sides also signed additional agreements involving immigration control, diamond mining in border areas and cultural exchanges. Referring to the tens of thousands of Congolese expelled from Angola since the end of last year (ref D), Mbusa said the Angolan delegation claimed only Congolese found to be illegally in Angola, many of them recruited by Angolan concerns, were being expelled. He said Angola believes some 1.5m Congolese have taken Angolan nationality, and are well-integrated into life there. However, with legislative elections set for 2008 and a presidential vote in 2009, he said the Angolan government was concerned that they may be pro-UNITA.

¶18. (U) Discussions will continue in other areas at the commission's October session. The joint statement noted that dos Santos had accepted an invitation from Kabila for a state visit to Congo at a yet-to-be-determined date. Following his official visit to Luanda, Kabila visited the port of Lobito in Benguela, the former terminus of a disused rail link to Katanga, which is being rebuilt by China.

¶19. (C) Comment. Angola intervened in the Second Congo War (1998-2003) on behalf of Laurent Kabila, Joseph Kabila's father, preventing his overthrow. Circumstances have changed since and both governments place a high premium on good relations. Dos Santos was initially unwilling to accept further mediation of the border dispute but agreed in the end to the Congolese proposal to bring in Belgian and European experts to provide technical cover for what is likely to be a conclusion confirming the Angolan position. End comment.

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